

9. Weight Loss For Women Professionals - with Dr. Amruti Choudry



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Michael: Well, hey everyone, and welcome to another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. We're so excited to have you here with us today. And so as a gastroenterologist, I get a lot of questions from patients about weight loss and out there there is so much discussion about diet and exercise. There's actually so much more to this, and so we're super excited for our guest today. Hi Arpita. How are you?

Arpita: I'm good. How are you?

Michael: I am good. Why don't you tell us about who is here with us today?

Arpita: Okay. I'm so excited for this. This is Dr. Amruti Choudry, she is here. I had the pleasure of meeting her unexpectedly at the Life Coach School Mastermind in 2021, I think on the boat with like 300 other doctors and it was so much fun. And she's actually good friends with one of my good friends, Melissa Parsons. And so we were just sitting there at the table chit-chatting and getting to know each other and just her energy was amazing. I just loved it. So happy. And so, positive and her accent is so fun. Just I love to hear her talk. But that's how I first met her. And then over that week when we were there, I got to meet her adorable children and her wonderful husband. And it was just so cute to see this beautiful family. And we just became friends. And so over the next couple of months, we just messaged and, you know, we're developing our friendship. And on Facebook I would see some of her posts. And I was taken aback because I knew she was a Weight Loss Coach, but I didn't really recognize how much of a transformation she had made for herself until I saw this one post that she had put of her pre or before weight loss picture. And it truly blew my mind. And I was just a little bit taken aback because she is so humble. She didn't say anything about that, right? And so when I saw that, I was just like, oh my gosh, this woman is amazing.

So I am so excited to talk today to Dr. Amruti Choudry she is an Advanced Certified life and weight loss coach, and she's a physician in the uk. She coaches women who wanna feel lighter in their minds and bodies in a simple and really easily doable way. She lost 92 pounds or 42 kilograms in her journey and now helps her clients to do the same by getting to the root cause of why they're overeating so they can achieve a permanent weight loss and freedom from their food, cycle, what they're addicted to with their food. So I hope I didn't butcher that with you too much, but I am so excited to have you here today. Tell us anything I missed and tell us a little bit about yourself.

Amruti: Oh, I'm so honored to be here. Thank you so much for having me. Yeah, you got it all right. I don't have anything else to say. No, I'm just kidding. I always have things to say. Yeah I feel so honored to be able to do this work in the world. Literally it just started off as a weight loss journey and I was like, you know what? it was just one of those, I was a general practitioner in the UK and I used to feel so much shame when I was advising my patients on weight loss. Because I had tried everything under the sun, and I'm one of those very cognitive people, as you know, like being

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physicians we're like very much in our brains. We wanna know all the science, we wanna know about it all. So I would research all of that, but then I would try everything. I would do it all perfectly. And there was still something missing because I still wasn't losing any further weight. And so, that's when I, you know, after trying all the diets under the sun, I found life coaching and I was like, ok, what's the worst that could happen? Lemme just give this thing a go. You know? I was kind of like a little bit skeptical about it out first because I was like what are my emotions got to do with my eating? I was like, that doesn't make sense.

But I knew that there was something missing for me, and so I was like, okay, let's give it a go. Like I wasn't expecting too much from it, but that's when like everything changed for me and I was like, I went in for weight loss and yes, I lost 42 kilos, which is 92 pounds. But more importantly, I learned how to feel better. And on paper I had everything in my life, like, you know, a successful career, an amazing family, a beautiful home, like all of it. And I still wasn't feeling that good in myself. And so this allowed me to access that version of myself that I'd always wanted. And don't get me wrong, nothing changed in my life. Life was still rubbish 50% of the time, and amazing 50% of the time. But when I was able to be with that, everything changed. I was a much better wife, a much better parent, like I still shouted at my kids, but just not as much. And I was able to build this business that I never even, like, I've never been a businesswoman at all. And I was like, I just have this purpose. God put me on this earth to do this thing. It's magic and I need to share it with the world. So I was just like, okay, I'm just gonna start telling people I'm gonna get certified as a life coach and I'm just gonna like start spreading this magic. And that's how it all started.

Wow,

Michael: Wow. Yeah. There's so much about your story that just resonates for me because very similarly in my journey, right? Like, I had all the things and still just didn't feel like my life was complete, right? Like the house and the wife and the kids and the career and all the things were in place, but yet internally, something wasn't meshing and so my journey looks a little bit different than yours, but I completely, everything that you're saying, I get it a hundred percent. So talk a little bit about like, what your journey looked like and that process for you just after finding, you know, the life coaching and then how that transition happened from there.

Amruti: Hmm. So actually I'd already like, in terms of just the weight loss, I lost half of the weight beforehand, so about 21 kilos doing all the other things. And then the 21 kilos, when I started life coaching, I lost very quickly within four and a half months. And I wasn't really changing my food much. I was just learning how to pay attention to my emotions and give myself what food was giving me. And I was able to pay attention to my hunger signals and basically start managing my mind and changing my thoughts, which changed my results. So very soon I learned that these tools that I've

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learned in weight loss can be applied in all areas of my life. So I started applying it to my relationship with my husband, with my parenting, one area that I forgot to mention was improving my relationship with my mother-in-law and I didn't feel like I could talk about this for so long. Being an Indian woman, it's a very taboo thing in our culture. Like, you don't talk about family issues, you don't talk about these kinds of things, but it's so prevalent. And I was like, no, I'm gonna talk about it because it's definitely something that can improve just by tweaking your thinking a little bit and then learning how to know that other people don't cause your emotional experience. And when you can learn how to guide how you are currently feeling and think of things in just a slightly different way, everything changes. So my mother-in-law didn't change at all, and I like was able to completely drastically change my relationship with her.

So it started off like that and then I was like, okay, you know, when you get a taste of the magic, you were just like, oh my gosh, I want more of this. So I was like, okay, I'm gonna train as a coach, so I signed up for life coach school certification. I loved Brooke and I was listening to a podcast for kind of two years beforehand. I did that very quickly. I filled up my one-to-one coaching practice. I did an advanced certification in weight loss. I did deep dive coaching with Bev Aron and since then I've just really been going a lot more into not just the cognitive, but also the body work because I feel that that is often the missing piece, especially with very high functioning cognitive professionals. So that is what I really love to fix on.

Arpita: Well, I would love to hear more about a lot of different things. You've said so many good nuggets here. I think what would be so nice to start with is just to ask you, like when you, you said you lost 21 pounds and then you went to start doing the life coach, the mindset work around it and tell me what you implemented first or what you first recognized with that, that made such a difference, because it sounded like the last 21 was almost effortless because it had nothing to do with your diet and exercise, right?

Amruti: Yes.

Arpita: Can you speak a little bit about that first?

Amruti: Yeah, definitely. So I didn't change my exercise at all. In fact, I was hardly exercising. I would maybe do some walking and that was it. And I realized that before that what I was doing is I was burning 1500 calories a day because I was in that restriction mindset. I was like, I need to burn the calories. And I was doing all the things and it still wasn't working. And what I realized is when I you know, implemented the life coaching tools, I realized that it was much more like 80, you know, 95% was actually mindset and nutrition and only 5% was exercise. So that's when I was like, okay, no more stepper, no more burning 1500 calories a day. I just get to exercise to help with my mental health and my physical health and I don't need to restrict myself. So that's one little shift that I made.

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Another thing was I had so much fear of hunger, so I would overeat in advance because I was like, you know what it's like being a physician you like just about have time to go to the toilet for a wee if that and you know. So it was very busy, especially on my on call shifts. It was like 13 hour days, like nonstop. It was just like mad. So I had to learn how to advocate for myself, like take breaks, go to the toilet when needed, like fuel myself with water and like actual nourishing food. And that took raising myself concept to I am worth me spending this time and effort on.

And because my primitive brain would say things like, no, you don't have time. Just like throw anything together. And I had to really like, use that prefrontal cortex, that higher part of my brain, the part of my brain that actually wanted to get to that goal to be able to guide it. And so I knew that in the moment if I didn't plan my food and if I didn't like advocate for myself, I would just grab any snack and I would just you know, when things were getting hard, I would just shovel down a few biscuits, you know, in the tea room. Quite a few biscuits. And that was just the norm. And so I had to anticipate that this is when I tend to overeat. So let me look into that. Let me actually dive deeper into that because my tendency was to kind of just push it away because I felt so much shame about that. So when I allowed myself to like dive deeper into those specific overeats, that's when I could find out what was food solving for me. And how can I give that to myself without food? Because I was overeating because I was stressed, so I just wanted some peace. How could I give myself peace throughout the day? I was overeating cause I wanted to escape. So how could I give myself an escape without resorting to food? And that changed everything for me because I realized that I was going to food to do all of these things but food wasn't actually the answer. It was giving myself what food was solving for me. And that was everything.

Michael: Yeah. And you've brought up an interesting point here, right? Because what ends up happening, and I think this is kind of what you were alluding to, is that you are feeling the stress, you're feeling the overwhelm so you go and there are cookies, and so you eat a cookie and you feel better in the moment. But then what ends up happening is it brings up a lot of shame, right? Like, I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have had that cookie. You know, and then you start beating up on yourself. If I keep eating cookies, I, you know, this weight loss journey is never gonna happen for me. And then you end up feeling bad and overwhelmed and stressed and what happens? You go to food to help yourself to feel better. And I think that this is the cycle that so many people get themselves into. So what are some of the tools that you use to help, to break the cycle to become more intentional?

Amruti: Mm. That is such a good point because firstly, I learned about the neuroscience of the brain and I learned that we have those two parts of the brain. So I know Michael, you touched on that. So we have the primitive brain and that primitive brain is that kind of animal part of our brain that wants us to survive. And its sole purpose is to ensure our survival. So it wants us to seek pleasure, avoid pain and stay how we are. So every single time it's kind of scanning for danger and it wants us to eat

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the food because it thinks that if there's a famine or if there's a bear chasing us, then we'll be able to like have the energy to run. And so when we are just acting from that primitive brain, then we are always gonna be eating the food. We are always gonna be having more, we are always going to say no to something that's gonna be good for us in the long term. Because we are much more immediate focused.

Whereas we also have that human part of our brain, which consists of 6% of our brain. The primitive brain is 94% of our brain, but the prefrontal cortex is only 6%. But it's so powerful that 6%, that is the part of our brain that allows us to be human and to have that reasoning. So that is the part of our brain that allows us to think of that greater goal. So that greater goal of weight loss thinking, Hey, I know that I want the food in the moment, but actually what I also want is to feel comfortable in my body. I want to be at healthy weight, so I am able to you know, fit into my clothes. I'm able to be as healthy as I can for my children. And so those longer term goals, I was able to think about them because I was able to use that prefrontal cortex. So what that meant in the moment was using planning, so making a very doable plan for myself so that I could anticipate what am I gonna need the next day? How can I like give myself what I truly needed?

So, for example, how would that look in a real life situation, say I knew that was on call that day. I knew that I wouldn't be able to get up off my desk, so I was like, okay, normally what I would do is I would be like, oh, it's okay. I'll just order something or I'll just go to the shop, but I would never be able to get to the shop because it was just so busy. So what that meant for me is anticipating, okay, I keep telling myself I'll just go to the shop, but I never get to go, so what I'll do is, I'll have my lunch made and it's ready for me in the fridge. I know that okay, at three o'clock I start getting hungry again. Okay. I'm gonna have some nuts that I know will be nourishing for me, and that will keep me satiated. Okay, I know that I tend to feel over hungry when I'm thirsty, so why don't I have two liters of water ready on my desk so that I can just grab it when needed? So this is what was a doable plan for me. I was anticipating, what am I gonna need tomorrow? And how can I serve myself? And how can I give myself what I truly want and how can I nourish myself? And when I was able to do that and think of that every single time, that's when everything changed for me.

Arpita: I think you touched on that too, it's just giving yourself permission. Like our brain wants to think that it's in control. Right? And so for me, my trouble area is the ice cream after dinner. Like I always wanna go, even if it's just one spoonful. Oh, it's just like that creamy, sweet, cool bliss. And that creamy, sweet, cool bliss every single night, just one spoon does contribute to issues with the weight. So what I've done is just being more intentional, recognizing, okay, after dinner is my problem time, this is when this comes up. So I had to literally have a conversation with my brain and say, you know, this is gonna come up, this always happens, and you don't want the end result of it. So what can we do to like, make it so that you still get what you want without feeling deprived? Right?

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Because when we feel deprived, that's when we wanna do it more. So I said, okay, you know what? You're gonna do it on Friday and Saturday. Just you get to pick two nights. You know, the weekends you wanna relax and you enjoy it and you wanna just sit and watch it, tv. Do it then and all the other nights when you feel it come on that you wanna have it, you just allow that urge to be there and you just be present with it. And it's a game changer, right? It totally, it's just your brain needing to think that it's always in control and that kind of allows it to take over and be good with it. So you also mentioned the embodiment portion, and I want to have you speak to us a little bit about that. You know, like, I don't know if this is talking a little bit about like the urge or the hunger versus the desire but can you speak to us a little bit about that as well?

Amruti: Yeah. I think initially when I started coaching, I was very much a kind of cognitive coach, so I was looking a lot more into the, okay, how can we change our thoughts because it's our thoughts that create our results. But what I noticed as I became more experienced in coaching is what tends to happen is sometimes when you are in a stress response in your body. So the stress responses are fight, flight, freeze, and fawn. Whenever we are in that stress response in our body, we are not gonna be able to access our highest cognitive function. So you may be trying to coach, you may be trying to coach, and it may just not be landing. And so what really helps is to learn how to calm down that nervous system with a lot of body techniques. So actually going into the body and trust me if you're listening to this and you're thinking, what is she talking about? This sounds very woo. I feel you. I hear you. I was the same, and I just had to give it a go because I knew that the coaching on its own was sometimes not enough for me because I have anxiety and I wake up with anxiety every day, and I had to learn how to be able to like calm down my nervous system every single day.

So I was like, okay, why don't I just try like feeling my emotions? So that was actually like going into my body, noticing what it felt like, that physical sensation, being with it and not trying to push it away and resist it, because that makes it so much worse. Using a lot of other body techniques like, A lot of meditation. I, I like, doing some breath work. I like paying attention to just us having some stillness in my brain and with my body. I like movement as well. So I have ADHD as well, so kind of getting rid of some of that excess energy that is really useful as well to kind of really allow yourself to let that emotion flow through you, because otherwise what happens is you want to push away the emotion and then you end up taking part in a behavior that will help you avoid that emotion.

So overeating over drinking, scrolling on social media, watching the next Netflix, overworking for a lot of us, right? So many of these habits that we don't actually particularly like the result of, and it feels great in the moment. But then it feels rubbish afterwards. So when you can allow yourself to feel those emotions with a lot of these body techniques, then it allows us to kind of create safety in our nervous system to be able to let them be there. And when you can do that, then you don't need any of these behaviors to make yourself feel better. And that's when you can allow it to be there. And it

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doesn't have to kind of send you into that flight or fright response.

Michael: I'm a hundred percent there with you in the feeling your emotions. It feels, woo, super skeptical about that myself. And if you're sitting, listening to this episode thinking, oh, feeling my anxiety, that sounds terrible. It is, but what feels worse is avoiding the anxiety, doing the behaviors that you don't want to be doing and continuing to do things in a way that isn't authentic. Like you're not showing up in your life the way that you want to be. So while feeling your emotions doesn't sound great and it doesn't feel great, it is probably the most important thing, and I will tell you as a man and as a physician, this was not an easy thing for me to recognize or to move forward in or to do, but it has been some of the most important work, so I'm so glad that you are highlighting this.

Arpita: I wanna just add to Michael that you talked about like that, the feeling, what, what is the worst? Right? That we're scared of feeling it cause we're scared we're gonna get stuck in it. So, you know what's the worst that's gonna happen is feeling that feeling and in general, most feelings, if you allow yourself to recognize where it's showing up for you in your body, you know what's coming up for you with it? It takes roughly 90 seconds to a couple of minutes, right? And so if we can allow ourselves to be present in that, it slowly dissipates and then we can get to that higher level, that 6% prefrontal cortex thinking after the fact because we can't get there while we're in the thick of the emotions kind of overtaking our body.

Tell me a little bit about the, when we were talking about the embodiment and the, I don't remember now what the question is, it's regarding the desire versus the actual sensation of hunger. Can you speak a little bit about that? Because that, I didn't even recognize that there was a difference before.

Amruti: Yeah. So there's a difference between the physical sensation of hunger and the emotional hunger. And what tends to happen is you may be experiencing a bit of both, and so it may be useful for you to know the difference in your body of which one you are experiencing the most. Physical hunger generally tends to feel like it's a bit of a wave of hunger, and then your body accesses your fat stores and it tends to dissipate. When you are in emotional hunger, what tends to happen is it feels much more urgent. It feels much more like I need to eat right now. It may feel much stronger and it may feel like if I don't eat, then something bad is going to happen. That is often what emotional hunger tends to feel like. And so you may feel a lot of urges to eat when there is an underlying emotion there.

So when you are able to tell the difference in your body, and actually when it is emotional hunger, asking yourself the question, what do I think food is gonna solve for me right now? Often it's like, I just need a rest. I just want some peace from my kids who are driving me up the wall or I just need to escape a little bit from this because I'm just doing too much. When you can actually like, find the reason that you want to eat there and then, and it feels really urgent for you to eat, that's when you can

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really get to that root cause of what food is solving for you. And that's when it gets really fun because when you realize that, hey, I can feel that emotion in my body and I can give myself authentically what I think food is gonna solve for me, then you never need to rely on food or other external things to make yourself feel better ever again. And that is when life opens up because you get to do those things that you have been holding yourself back from for so long. And it's so fun. So fun. Oh my goodness.

Michael: Well, this has been so enlightening. I've loved this conversation. Can you tell our audience if they wanna learn more about this or learn more about you, where they can find you?

Amruti: Yeah. Thank you so much for having me on. It's been so fun. I feel like I could talk about this like for ages and ages. So this has just been a little snippet, but you can find out, like you can listen to me on my podcast, which is Weight Loss for Women Professionals. You can listen on any big platform. Um, You can go to my website, www.amruticoaching.com, and I would love for you to share your biggest takeaway on social media. I'm @amruti.Coaching I'm happy for you to message me for anything. I have a one-to-one coaching practice and I have a group coaching program, so yeah.

Arpita: Yay. Awesome. So good to see you. Amruti and talk to you today, and I cannot wait till the next time we, we meet again in person.

Amruti: Oh, I can't wait. I'm gonna squeeze you so hard. And Michael, it was so lovely to talk to you and I'm gonna squeeze you too. It's gonna be so fun.

Arpita: Ok. Perfect.

Michael: Amazing. Again, thank you so much for being here today and, and look forward to chatting again real soon.

Amruti: Thank you so much everyone. Bye.

Michael: Bye.

Arpita: Bye. Take care.